

The background of the cover is a photograph of a baptism. A person is submerged in water, with only their head and shoulders visible. A hand, wearing a ring, is placed on the person's forehead. Bubbles are visible in the water around the person's head.

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REASON & REVELATION

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What is the **PURPOSE** of Baptism?

Part 1

JESUS or YESHUA?

Introducing
3 NEW Tracts

Baptism and the Greek of Matthew 28:19-20

[Part 1]

Dave Miller, Ph.D.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen” (Matthew 28:19-20).

[EDITOR’S NOTE: This article is the first installment in a two-part series taken from AP’s soon-to-be released book *Baptism & the Greek Made Simple*.]

THIS declaration of Jesus just prior to His exit from the Earth constitutes the “marching orders” for the apostles in promulgating the spread of Christianity in the first century. Embedded within this “Great Commission” is one of the key prerequisites to being saved: water baptism. The precise wording expressed by Jesus provides clarification in ascertaining the essentiality of baptism.

Greek Present Participles

Consider Matthew’s use of participles in this passage. In Greek, a participle indicates action as it relates to the main verb.¹ **Present** participles indicate action that occurs **at the same time** as the action of the main verb. Consider

the following affirmations of this important point by prominent Greek grammarians:

- **J. Gresham Machen** [early 20th-century Presbyterian theologian, professor of New Testament at Princeton Seminary, founder of Westminster Theological Seminary, author of the Greek grammar *New Testament Greek for Beginners*]—“The present participle, therefore, is used if the action denoted by the participle is represented as taking place **at the same time as the action denoted by the leading verb**, no matter whether the action denoted by the leading verb is past, present or future.”²
- **Ray Summers** [20th-century professor of New Testament and Greek at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and Baylor University, author of the Greek grammar *Essentials of New Testament Greek*]—“The

time of action in participles is indicated in the relation of the action of the participle to the action of the main verb.... The present participle indicates action which is **contemporaneous with the action of the main verb**.”³

- **H.E. Dana and Julius Mantey** [20th-century Baptist seminary professors of New Testament Interpretation, authors of the Greek grammar *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*]—“**Simultaneous action relative to the main verb** is ordinarily expressed by the present.”⁴
- **A.T. Robertson** [early 20th-century eminent professor of New Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, author of *Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament* as well as *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*]—“The present participle gets its time from the principal verb.”⁵
- **James Hadley** [19th-century professor of Greek at Yale, member of the American Committee for the revision of the New Testament and president of the American Oriental Society; first rate linguist, with knowledge of Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic, Armenian, and several Celtic languages]—“The participles denote **time relatively to that of the verb on which they depend**. The present and perfect participles denote time relatively *present*, the aorist participle time relatively *past*, the future participle time relatively *future*.”⁶
- **William Goodwin** [19th-century classical scholar and Eliot professor of Greek at Harvard University, first director of the American School for Classical Studies at Athens, president

of the American Philological Association]—“The tenses of the participle...are present, past, or future *relatively* to the time of the verb with which they are connected.”⁷

- **William Mounce** [21st-century New Testament Greek scholar, chaired the ESV translation committee, directed the Greek Program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, and author of *Basics of Biblical Greek*]—“[T]he time of the participle is relative to the time of the main verb. The present participle describes an action occurring **at the same time as the main verb.**”⁸
- **Raphael Kuhner** [19th-century German classical scholar educated at the University of Göttingen, taught in the Hanover Lyceum, produced a large, two-volume Greek grammar translated by William Jelf, with an enlarged third edition in four volumes produced by Friedrich Blass and Bernhard Gerth]—“The action or state denoted by the participle is, therefore, **usually prior to that denoted by the verb** with which it is connected, **sometimes coincident.**”⁹
- **James Moulton** [early 20th-century philologist and Greek scholar, Tutor at Didsbury College, Fellow of King’s College, Cambridge, Greenwood Professor of Hellenistic Greek and Indo-European Philology at Manchester University, Doctor of Letters, University of London. Produced *Prolegomena*, the first volume in the highly acclaimed series *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*]—“the linear action in a participle, connected with a finite verb in past or present time, **partakes in the time of its principal.**”¹⁰

While many more could be cited,¹¹ these observations from respected Greek grammarians of the last two centuries demonstrate a simple but certain truth regarding the use of participles in the Greek language of the New Testament. Robison demonstrated the same usage among the apostolic fathers.¹²

Before turning to the Greek grammar of Matthew 28:19-20, consider the following examples in English that illustrate the function of the present participle as it relates to the main verb:

Example #1: “Go make pancakes, mixing the batter in the porcelain bowl, pouring it on the griddle.” “Make (pancakes)” serves as the main verb of the sentence. “Mixing” and “pouring” are present participles. They refer to action that occurs at the same time as the main verb. In other words, “mixing the batter” and “pouring it on the griddle” describe **how** to achieve the action of the main verb. Mixing the batter and pouring it on the griddle do not refer to action that

is **subsequent** to the action of the main verb. They do not occur **after** the pancakes are made. Rather, they represent actions that are contemporaneous with the action of the main verb.

Example #2: “Go clean the yard, mowing the lawn, raking the leaves.”

The main verb of this sentence is “clean (the yard)” followed by the two present participles “mowing” and “raking.” Being present participles, “mowing” and “raking” represent action that occurs **simultaneous** with the action of the main verb. The father is not instructing his son to clean the yard, and then after doing so, to subsequently mow the yard and rake the leaves. Rather, mowing the yard and raking the leaves indicate how the action of the main verb (clean the yard) is to be achieved.

Turning now to the Greek grammar of Matthew 28:19-20, our Lord uttered an imperative directive couched in the main verb *matheteusate* from *matheteuo*—“to

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make disciples.”¹³ The apostles were to go throughout the world and “make disciples.” Jesus clarified this directive with two **present** participles: “teaching” and “baptizing.” Southern Baptist scholar of New Testament Greek A.T. Robertson says these two participles in this passage are “modal participles,”¹⁴ i.e., they identify the manner, means, or method by which the action of the main verb is accomplished. Samuel Green agreed, listing Matthew 28:19 as an example of the “modal” use, “setting forth the manner in which the given action was performed.”¹⁵ Dana and Mantey state that the “Modal Participle” “may signify the manner in which the action of the main verb is accomplished.”¹⁶ Hence, they pinpoint the mode by which the action of the main verb is achieved (also “manner or means”).¹⁷

Observe that the English reader might be tempted to interpret Jesus’ command to mean that the apostles were **first** to make disciples, i.e., convert people to Christianity, and **then** baptize them, and then **after** baptizing them to teach them additional Christian doctrine. However, the Greek grammar of the passage, i.e., Matthew’s inspired Greek translation of Jesus’ (perhaps Aramaic) remarks, weighs heavily against this interpretation and clarifies succinctly Jesus’ intended meaning.¹⁸

The main verb of the sentence, “make disciples,” is followed by two present participles that represent actions that occur **at the same time** as the action of the main verb. “Teaching” (*didaskontes*) and “baptizing” (*baptidzontes*) are actions

that occur simultaneous with “making disciples,” i.e., they indicate what Jesus meant when He directed the apostles to go throughout the nations and convert people. To make disciples, the apostles were required to teach people the Gospel, including the necessity of observing all of Jesus’ commands, and then to baptize them in water. Those individuals who complied with these two actions were thereby made disciples.¹⁹ Alexander Bruce, 19th-century Scottish theologian and chair of Apologetics and New Testament Exegesis in the Free Church Hall in Glasgow, who authored the commentary on Matthew in Nicoll’s series *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, wrote: “baptism the condition of discipleship = make disciples by baptizing.”²⁰ In his commentaries on the Greek Testament, another 19th-century scholar, English churchman, theologian, and textual critic, Henry Alford, specifically noted concerning Matthew 28:19-20: “Both these present participles are the **conditioning components** of the imperative aor. preceding.”²¹ In other words, being taught and baptized are **the conditions** for becoming a disciple. As Matthew Poole explained: “make disciples... must be first by preaching and instructing them in the principles of the Christian faith.... I cannot be of their mind, who think that persons may be baptized before they are taught.... They were first to preach and to baptize amongst the Jews, and then thus to disciple all nations.”²² Hence, John Lightfoot explained: “*Make disciples*: Bring them in by baptism.... When they are under baptism, they are no

longer under heathenism; [baptism] puts a difference between those who are under the discipleship of Christ, and those who are not.”²³ Or as British Baptist scholar and professor of New Testament Interpretation G.R. Beasley-Murray noted: “the participles describe the manner in which a disciple is made.... It is when a hearer believes and is baptized that he becomes a full disciple; which is the same as saying that a disciple is made such *in baptism by faith*.... Baptizing belongs to the means by which a disciple is made.”²⁴

American theologian, ordained Presbyterian minister, and graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, Albert Barnes, explained the import of the participles in his commentary: “This word properly means *disciple*, or *make disciples of*. This was to be done, however, by teaching, and by administering the rite of baptism.”²⁵ R.C.H. Lenski, Lutheran scholar whose 12-volume series of commentaries on the New Testament (from a traditional Lutheran perspective) contains a literal translation of the Greek texts, observes: “Two participles of means then state how all nations are to be made into disciples: by baptizing them and by teaching them.”²⁶ Professor of New Testament Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, founder and executive director of the Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts, Daniel Wallace, insists that the two participles (baptizing and teaching)

should not be taken as attendant circumstance. First, they do not fit the normal pattern for attendant circumstance participles (they are

present tense and follow the main verb). And second, they obviously make good sense as participles of *means*: i.e., **the means by which the disciples were to make disciples.**²⁷

R.T. France, New Testament scholar and Principal of Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, explains that “*Baptizing* and ‘teaching’ (v. 20) are participles dependent on the main verb, *make disciples*; they further specify what is involved in discipleship.”²⁸ And A. Lukyn Williams insightfully observes: “The imperative aorist *matheteusate* is, as it were, decomposed by the two following present participles, ‘baptizing’ and ‘teaching’.... The present participle denotes **the mode of initiation** into discipleship. **Make them disciples by baptizing them.**”²⁹ Or as Norrisian Professor of Divinity at Cambridge and Lord Bishop of Winchester, Edward Harold Browne, explained in the well-respected *Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible*: “Make disciples of all nations **by baptizing them**... [T]hey were to be made disciples, admitted into the fellowship of Christ’s religion, **by baptism.**”³⁰ And Heinrich Meyer, noted German Protestant theologian, in his *Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, observed that it is in the “baptizing” where “discipling” “is to be *consummated*, not something that must be done *after* the *matheteusate*.”³¹

In view of these decisive linguistic considerations, examine the following three sentences together:

- “Go make pancakes, mixing the batter in the porcelain bowl, pouring it on the griddle.”

- “Go clean the yard, mowing the lawn, raking the leaves.”
- “Go make disciples..., baptizing them..., teaching them....”

Now ask and answer three questions based solely on the grammar:

- Can pancakes be made without mixing batter and pouring the batter on the griddle? Answer: No.
- Can the yard be cleaned without mowing the lawn and raking the leaves? Answer: No.
- Can disciples of Christ be made without teaching and baptizing them? Answer: No.

[to be continued]

ENDNOTES

- ¹ “The participle has not time in itself. Time with the participle is purely relative; it gets its time from the verb with which it is used”—William Davis (1923), *Beginner’s Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row), p. 99; cf. John Huddleston (1961), *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (New York: Macmillan), p. 73.
- ² J. Gresham Machen (1923), *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (Toronto: Macmillan), pp. 105-106, emp. added.
- ³ Ray Summers (1950), *Essentials of New Testament Greek* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press), pp. 89-90, emp. added.
- ⁴ H.E. Dana and Julius Mantey (1955), *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: Macmillan), p. 230, emp. added.
- ⁵ A.T. Robertson (1909), *Short Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: A.C. Armstrong & Son), p. 197.
- ⁶ James Hadley (1885), *A Greek Grammar for Schools and Colleges*

- (New York: D. Appleton), p. 272, italics in orig., emp. added.
- ⁷ William Goodwin (1893), *A Greek Grammar* (Boston: Ginn & Company), p. 275, italics in orig.
- ⁸ William Mounce (2003), *Basics of Biblical Greek* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), p. 255, emp. added.
- ⁹ Raphael Kuhner (1872), *Grammar of the Greek Language*, trans. B.B. Edwards & S.H. Taylor (New York: D. Appleton & Co.), p. 471, italics in orig., emp. added.
- ¹⁰ James H. Moulton (1906), *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Prolegomena* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), second edition, p. 126, emp. added.
- ¹¹ e.g., Ernest Burton (1898), *Syntax of the Moods and Tenses in New Testament Greek* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), p. 54; H.P.V. Nunn (1973 reprint), *A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 123; Jeremy Duff (2005), *The Elements of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 85.
- ¹² Henry Robison (1913), *Syntax of the Participle in the Apostolic Fathers* (Chicago: University of Chicago), pp. 11ff.
- ¹³ James Moulton (1919), *A Grammar of New Testament Greek: Accidence and Word Formation* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), 2:400.
- ¹⁴ A.T. Robertson (1934), *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN: Broadman), p. 1128.
- ¹⁵ Samuel Green (1886), *Handbook to the Grammar of the Greek Testament* (New York: Fleming H. Revell), p. 332.
- ¹⁶ p. 228. Also Curtis Vaughan and Virtus Gideon (1979), *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman), pp. 157, 160—“The circumstantial participle (sometimes called ‘adverbial’) defines **the circumstances under which the action of a verb**

(cont. on p. 104)

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PSALM 80

be angry for ever? shall thy jealousy burn like fire?
6 Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the kingdoms that have not called upon thy name.
7 For they have devoured Jacob, and laid waste his dwelling place.
8 O remember not against us former iniquities: let thy tender mercies speedily prevent us: for we are brought very low.
9 Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.
10 Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is their God? let him be known among the heathen in our sight by the revenging of the blood of thy servants which is shed.
11 Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee; according to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;
12 And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.
13 So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever: we will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

PSALM 80

To the chief Musician upon Shō-shānō-lm-E-dith, A Psalm of A-saph.
GIVE ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cher-ū-bims, shine forth.
2 Before E-phrā-īm and Benjamin and Mā-nās-seh stir up thy strength, and come and save us.
3 Turn us again, O God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.

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God's renewed favour sought

4 O LORD God of hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?
5 Thou feedest them with the bread of tears; and givest them tears to drink in great measure.
6 Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours: and our enemies laugh among themselves.
7 Turn us again, O God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.
8 Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt: thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.
9 Thou preparedst room before it, and didst cause it to take deep root, and it filled the land.
10 The hills were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars.
11 She sent out her boughs unto the sea, and her branches unto the river.
12 Why hast thou then broken down her hedges, so that all they which pass by the way do pluck her?
13 The boar out of the wood doth waste it, and the wild beast of the field doth devour it.
14 Return, we beseech thee, O God of hosts: look down from heaven, and behold, and visit this vine;
15 And the vineyard which thy right hand hath planted, and the branch that thou madest strong for thyself.
16 It is burned with fire, it is cut down: they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.
17 Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand, upon the son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself.
18 So will not we go back from thee: quicken us, and we will call upon thy name.
19 Turn us again, O LORD God

PSALM 81

To the chief Musician upon Gīt-tith, A Psalm of A-saph.

SING aloud unto God our strength: make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
2 Take a psalm, and bring hither the umbral, the pleasant harp with the psaltery.
3 Blow up the trumpet in the new moon, in the time appointed, our solemn feast day.
4 For this was a statute for Israel, and a law of the God of Jacob.
5 This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony, when he went out through the land of Egypt: where I heard a language that I understood not.
6 I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots.
7 Thou calledst in trouble, and I answered thee; in the secret place of thunder: I removed thee at the waters of Mer-i-bah. Sē-lāh.
8 Hear, O my people, and I will testify unto thee: O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;
9 There shall no strange god be in thee; neither shalt thou worship any strange god.
10 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.
11 But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.
12 So I gave them up unto their own hearts' lust: and they walked in their own counsels.
13 Oh that my people had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways!
14 I should soon have subdued

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their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries.
15 The haters of the LORD should have submitted themselves unto him: but their time should have endured for ever.
16 He should have fed them also with the finest of the wheat: and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee.

PSALMS 81-83

PSALM 82

A Psalm of A-saph.

GOD standeth in the congregation of the mighty; he judgeth among the gods.
2 How long will ye judge unjustly, and accept the persons of the wicked? Sē-lāh.
3 Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.
4 Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked.
5 They know not, neither will they understand; they walk on in darkness: all the foundations of the earth are out of course.
6 I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.
7 But ye shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.
8 Arise, O God, judge the earth: for thou shalt inherit all nations.

PSALM 83

A Song or Psalm of A-saph.

KEEP not thou silence, O God: hold not thy peace, and be not still, O God.
2 For, lo, thine enemies make a tumult: and they that hate thee have lifted up the head.
3 They have taken crafty counsel against thy people, and consulted against thy hidden ones.
4 They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation; that the name of Israel



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they were baptized. Ask yourself if you have been clothed with Christ.

OBJECTION #6: "Baptism is like a badge on a uniform that merely gives evidence that the person is already saved."

The New Testament nowhere expounds the idea that baptism is merely a "badge" or "outward sign of an inward grace." Yes, baptism can biblically be referred to as a symbolic act; but what does it symbolize? Previous forgiveness? No. Romans 6 indicates that baptism symbolizes the previous death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Thus the benefits of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection (remember, Jesus' blood, which blots out sin, was shed in the context of His death, burial, and resurrection) are realized and received by the individual when he obediently (in penitent faith) submits to a similar ordeal, i.e., the death of his own "old man" or "body of sin" (Romans 6:6), burial (immersion into a watery tomb), and resurrection (rising from the watery tomb).

Denominational doctrine maintains that forgiveness of sin is received prior to baptism. If so, the "new life" of the saved individual would also begin prior to baptism. Yet Paul said the "new life" occurs **after** baptism. He reiterated this to the Colossians. The "putting off of the body of the flesh by Christ's redemption" (Colossians 2:11) is accomplished in the context of water immersion and baptism. His blood cleanses from all unrighteousness. He raised us with Him to newness of life (Colossians 2:12).

undeniable reference to the new follows—not precedes—baptism]

OBJECTION #7: "Baptism is a meritorious work, which is how we are saved by grace, not by works."

"Works" or "steps" of salvation do not "merit" his salvation up to the point of obedient compliance with those actions. "Steps" (Romans 4:12) or "a process" of salvation (the biblical concept of preconditions of faith, or acts of obedience) James called "works" (James 2:14). James was not saying that one can earn salvation (James 2:24). Rather, he was warning the **active** nature of faith, showing that saving faith, faith that is **alive**—as opposed to dead and therefore utterly useless—is the only kind that is acceptable. Faith that obeys whatever actions God indicated must be done. The obedience of both Abraham and Rahab is so illustrative of the kind of faith that is acceptable. They manifested their faith by actively doing what God wanted of them. Obedient or active trust is the only kind that avails anything. Thus, an obedient faith is essential.

The actions themselves are manifestations of this trust that justifies, not the other way around. But notice that according to James, one cannot have one without the other. Faith, if it is **dead**, until it leads on to the specifications God assigned. It is the essence of salvation that separates the saved from the unsaved.

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takes place.... The circumstantial participle may be **modal**, denoting **the manner in which the action of the main verb is effected.** Classical scholar Herbert Weir Smyth agreed: “The circumstantial participle expresses simply circumstance or manner in general. It may imply various other relations, such as time, manner, means, cause, purpose, concession, condition, etc.... The time denoted by the participle is **only relative to that of the governing verb;**” “The action set forth by the present participle is generally coincident (rarely antecedent or subsequent) to that of the leading verb”—(1963), *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), pp. 457,419.

¹⁷ See also Burton, p. 172—“The participle expressing manner or means often denotes the same action as that of the principal verb.... [A]s respects its modal function it is a participle of manner or means.” Also Cleon Rogers Jr. and Cleon Rogers III (1998), *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), p. 66.

¹⁸ “Two or more participles...unconnected by καί, are frequently...joined to one principal verb”—George Winer (1870), *A Treatise on the Grammar of the New Testament Greek*, trans. W.F. Moulton (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), p. 433. Lange notes that “there is no καί before διδάσκοντες, so that *baptizing* and *teaching* are not strictly coordinate, as two successive acts”—John Lange (1884), *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Matthew* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons), 1:558. Again, in other words, both occur coincident with “make disciples.”

¹⁹ Word order in Greek is far more flexible than in English (“The freedom of the Greek from artificial rules and its response to the

play of the mind is never seen better than in the order of words in the sentence”—Robertson, 1934, p. 417), which explains the sequence of the participle “baptizing” occurring before the participle “teaching,” even though in actual point of time a person logically would have to be taught before he could be baptized. One beauty of Koine Greek is the way participles minimize this confusion by deriving their “time” from the action of the principal verb. Again, Robertson noted concerning aorist participles: “It is needless to press the point...that the order of the participle is immaterial” (p. 861). Since both participles in this instance are **present** participles, **both** refer to activity that must be associated with the action of the main verb. Though they **follow** the verb, their action cannot occur **after** the action of the main verb. (A future participle would more appropriately serve that function). **Both** actions must occur in concert with “make disciples.” No linguistic justification exists for assigning the action of one of the present participles (“baptizing”) as occurring concurrently with the leading verb while assigning the action of the other present participle (“teaching”) as occurring subsequent to the action of the leading verb. Note further, as a point of clarification, that the two present participles do not indicate simultaneous action with **each other**—but rather both are contemporaneous with **the leading verb**. Some writers demonstrate confusion on this point by assigning the “teaching” to post-baptism indoctrination. While the New Testament certainly requires new converts to continue their study and instruction **after** their conversion, Jesus’ use of **present** participles demonstrates that He was referring to the teaching that is initially necessary

to enable a person to become His disciple. Both “baptizing” and “teaching” are necessary in order to become a disciple of Christ. New Testament scholar William Hendriksen succinctly summarized the point: “In such a construction it would be completely wrong to say that because the word *baptizing* precedes the word *teaching*, therefore people must be baptized before they are taught.... The concepts ‘baptizing’ and ‘teaching’ are simply two activities, in co-ordination with each other, but both subordinate to ‘make disciples.’ In other words, by means of being baptized and being taught a person becomes a disciple”—William Hendriksen (1973), *Exposition of the Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), p. 1000, italics in orig. Though Carson sends mixed signals in this regard, he at least states plainly that “*matheteuo* entails both preaching and response.... The NT can scarcely conceive of a disciple who is not baptized or is not instructed. Indeed, the force of this command is to make Jesus’ disciples responsible for making disciples of others, **a task characterized by baptism and instruction**”—D.A. Carson (1984), *Matthew* in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 8:597. Stanley Porter explains that “the syntax probably indicates that the action of the two participles is logically concurrent in that the two actions of baptizing and teaching indicate, at least in part, what it means to make disciples,” and so inserts into his “interpretative translation” just before “baptizing” the word “including” (pp. 251-252). Though he ends up applying “teaching” to post-baptism instruction in obedience, he rightly concludes: “The command to make disciples is defined by two further

prominent concepts, grammaticalized by two participles: baptism and teaching”—(2015), *Linguistic Analysis of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), p. 253. Note further that Mark’s wording of the “Great Commission” places “preach the Gospel” parallel to Matthew’s “make disciples.” So where Matthew has make disciples by teaching and baptizing, Mark has save people by preaching the Gospel to them, causing them to believe and be baptized. Matthew and Mark intended to say the same thing. **Observe in summary:** Even if a solid linguistic case could be made proving that “teaching” refers to post-conversion teaching that follows baptism, nevertheless, **the design of baptism remains the same**, since the “baptizing” occurs simultaneous with “make disciples,” i.e., baptism is essential to salvation, pinpointing the moment when a penitent believer becomes a disciple of Christ.

²⁰ Alexander Bruce (no date), *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 1:339.

²¹ Henry Alford (1874), *Alford’s Greek Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1980 reprint), 1:306, emp. added.

²² Matthew Poole (no date), *A Commentary on the Holy Bible: Matthew-Revelation* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 3:146.

²³ John Lightfoot (1979 reprint), *A Commentary on the New Testament from the Talmud and Hebraica: Matthew-Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), pp. 379-380, italics in orig.

²⁴ G.R. Beasley-Murray (1976 reprint), *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), pp. 88-89, italics in orig. It is surely eye-opening for renowned Baptist pastor and President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in the late 19th century, John

Broadus, to acknowledge the undeniable grammatical function of the present participles in this passage (“disciple by baptizing...by teaching”; and so many understand it”) only to dismiss the clear import of the language in order to evade the contradiction between his personal doctrinal belief and the words of our Lord. John Broadus (1886), *Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Philadelphia, PA: American Baptist Publication Society), p. 594.

²⁵ Albert Barnes (1956 reprint), *Notes on the New Testament: Matthew and Mark* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), p. 323, italics in orig.

²⁶ R.C.H. Lenski (1943), *The Interpretation of St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg), p. 1173. Or as Johann Albrecht Bengel noted: “The verb, μαθητεύειν, signifies *to make disciples*; it **includes baptism and teaching**”—(1858), *Gnomon of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), 1:489, italics in orig., emp. added. Commenting on “make disciples,” Eiselen notes: “*Make disciples*. This describes a comprehensive duty of which baptizing and teaching form a part”—Frederick Eiselen, ed.

(1929), *The Abingdon Bible Commentary* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press), p. 995, italics in orig.

²⁷ Daniel Wallace (1996), *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), p. 645, italics in orig., emp. added.

²⁸ R.T. France (1985), *The Gospel According to Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), 2002 reprint, p. 414, italics in orig.

²⁹ A. Lukyn Williams (1961 reprint), “Matthew,” *The Pulpit Commentary*, ed. H.D.M. Spence and J.S. Exell (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans), p. 645, italics in orig., emp. added.

³⁰ Frederick Meyrick (1868), “Baptism,” in *William Smith’s Dictionary of the Bible*, rev. and ed. H.B. Hackett (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1971 reprint), 1:236,240, emp. added. Also A.J. Maas (1898), *The Gospel According to Matthew* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder), p. 315.

³¹ Heinrich Meyer (1881), *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: The Gospel of St. Matthew* (Edinburgh: T.&T. Clark), p. 301, italics in orig.



SPEAKING SCHEDULES

Kyle Butt

September 14-16	Barrackville, WV	(304) 363-9060
September 19	Huntsville, AL	(256) 895-8717
September 23	Green Hill, AL	(256) 757-5126

Eric Lyons

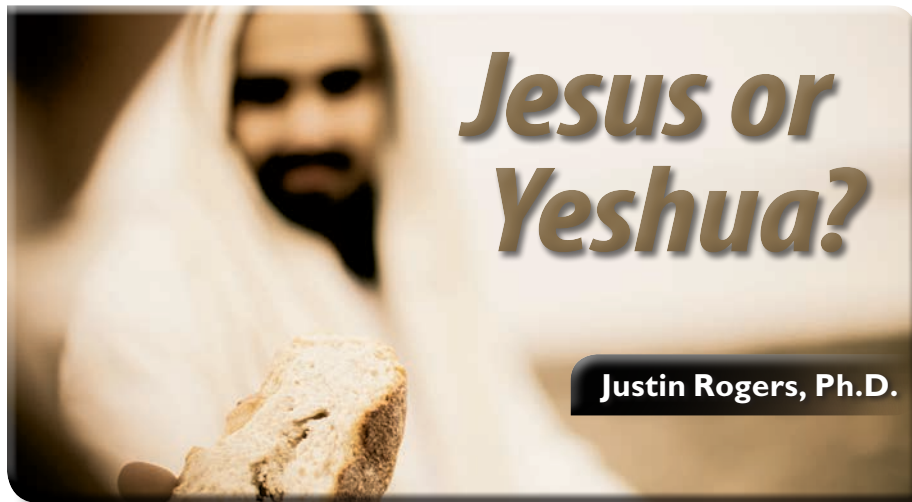
September 9-12	Cottontown, TN	(615) 352-7762
September 14-15	Denver, CO	(303) 986-4521
September 28-30	Klamath Falls, OR	(541) 882-0374

Dave Miller

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[**EDITOR'S NOTE:** A.P. auxiliary writer Dr. Rogers serves as Director of the Graduate School of Theology and Associate Professor of Biblical Studies at Freed-Hardeman University. He holds an M.A. in New Testament from F-HU as well as an M.Phil. and Ph.D. in Hebraic, Judaic, and Cognate Studies from Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.]

A MINORITY of Christian voices through the centuries have insisted on stressing the Jewishness of Jesus.¹ Already in the New Testament, we learn that some Christians were retaining Jewish customs and doctrines in an attempt to create a hybrid religion. These attempts met stern apostolic criticism (e.g., Galatians 5:2; Colossians 2:16). Generally, as Christianity transitioned from a majority-Jewish to a majority-Gentile religion, these voices were steadily muted. However, a resurgence of the Jewish Jesus movement has led a number of people to allege ecclesiastical conspiracies to “cover up” the Jewishness of Jesus. Among the sensational claims is the alleged “change” of the name of God’s Son from Yeshua to Jesus.

Before we analyze the rationale and legitimacy behind the question of the name, let us affirm two incontrovertible truths. First, Jesus was a Jew. Scripture is clear that the New Covenant was not inaugurated until the death of Christ (Hebrews 9:16-17). Therefore, Jesus (or Yeshua, if you like) lived His entire life as a Jew under the Law of Moses. The name has **nothing** to do with His Jewishness. Second, His name in Hebrew was indeed *Yᵉhōshūaʿ*, or more likely in Aramaic *Yēshūaʿ*. Growing up in the Galilee region, Jesus would have almost certainly spoken Aramaic, and He would not have heard His name as “Jesus.” Indeed, the Syriac translations of the New Testament spell the name *Yēshūaʿ*.² The New Testament, however, is not written in Aramaic or in Syriac, but in Greek. And the English name “Jesus” is a transliteration based on the Latin, which is based on the Greek, which is in turn based on the original Aramaic.

ALLEGED REASONS FOR THE NAME “CHANGE”

“**D**ON’T believe everything you read on the Internet.” This

maxim is taught to third-graders and college students alike. Still, it doesn’t seem to sink in. People continue to read Web sites that propagate fictional conspiracy theories to allege the name of God’s Son was changed from its pure Hebrew form to its current corruption. And here are a few of the most common reasons why.

First, it is alleged that early Christians—even the authors of the New Testament!—were racists. They wished to erase the Jewishness of Jesus from the record in an effort to make Him seem “Christian” and “Gentile.” This simply isn’t true. First, every author of the New Testament seems to possess a Jewish background of some kind, and most were born Jewish (cf. Galatians 2:15). Second, Paul can boast not only of his Jewish lineage (Philippians 3:5), but also claim, “I am a Pharisee” (present tense!) long after his conversion (Acts 23:6). Third, where there is racism in the New Testament, it is usually against **Gentiles** rather than Jews (Galatians 2:12-16; cf. Romans 2:14).

Second, some would never lay such an allegation as racism at the feet of the Apostles, but they have no qualms about hurling this insult at the Catholic Church. They believe the early church falsified manuscripts of the New Testament in order to erase “Yeshua” and insert the more Western-sounding “Jesus.” There is no evidence for such a claim. We have nearly 6,000 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament, and approximately 19,000 New Testament manuscripts in other early languages, such as Syriac, Coptic, and Latin. In addition to these direct

copies, we have tens of thousands of pages of early Christian writings, some of which are from Jewish-Christian groups. The name of Jesus occurs hundreds of thousands of times collectively in these ancient documents, and **none of them** speaks to a conspiratorial name change. If the “change” from Yeshua to Jesus was an early Catholic conspiracy, it is the best-executed cover-up in world history.

Third, it is occasionally alleged that the name Jesus is an attempt to insert paganism into Christianity. A few (very, **very** few) argue the name “Jesus” means “hail Zeus.” I suspect someone somewhere noticed the pronunciation of the name, especially in a language such as Spanish, sounds strikingly like “Hey-Zoos.” This must be a furtive nod to the chief god of the Greek pantheon, right? Not in the slightest. The New Testament was not written in English or Spanish, but in Greek. In Greek, “hail Zeus” would be *chaire zeu*, which bears absolutely no phonetic resemblance to “Jesus.”

HOW DID WE GET FROM YESHUA TO JESUS?

ALTHOUGH Jesus probably grew up in Galilee hearing His name as *Yēshūaʿ*, it is not the case that the Christian world moved **from** Yeshua **to** Jesus. This is because Yeshua and Jesus are not different names, but **different pronunciations of the same name**. Different languages hear sounds differently. The Hebrews of the Old Testament era heard the name of the Persian king as “Ahasuerus” whereas the Greeks heard it as “Xerxes” (compare ESV with NIV in Ezra 4:6). If your name is Peter in

the United States or Great Britain, you are Petros in Greece, Pietro in Italy, Pierre in France, and Pedro in Spain. Did each of these languages **change** your name!? No. These languages simply pronounce the same name in different ways. And so it is with Jesus. The Greek *Iēsous* represents the Aramaic *Yēshūaʿ*.

But what about the meaning of the name? Those who argue in favor of the superiority of the name Yeshua insist that the Hebrew form means “salvation” whereas the Greek form is meaningless. This is true, and I believe every Christian should know the name of Jesus in Hebrew and Aramaic means “salvation.” However, Peter-Petros-Pietro-Pierre-Pedro means “rock” only in the Greek language. It is meaningless in the others; yet none of us seems bothered by this problem, and no one insists on a consistent, universal pronunciation as *Petros*. Second, Matthew already felt the need to **explain** the name of Jesus in his Gospel (Matthew 1:21). And it is routine in the New Testament to translate the meaning of certain foreign words (e.g., Matthew 27:46; Mark 5:41; John 1:38, 41). If the inspired writers were content to use the medium of the Greek language, while also providing explanations, is it wrong of us to follow their example?

Third, there is more than one “Jesus” in the New Testament. In the genealogy of Christ a certain “Jesus son of Eliezer” is named (Luke 3:29). Then there is the Jesus also known as Justus (Colossians 4:11). Finally, the Old Testament hero Joshua is known in Greek transliteration as *Iēsous*, his name being indistinguish-

able in Greek from Jesus the Christ (Acts 7:45; Hebrews 4:8, KJV).

CONCLUSION

TECHNICALLY, if the New Testament were written in Hebrew or Aramaic, Yeshua would have been the form the authors used. But it wasn’t. It was written in Greek. So the authors represented the name as it was known in Greek. The name “Jesus,” in fact, was well-established in Greek transliteration as *Iēsous* thanks to the Septuagint, where it is found over 250 times. The New Testament authors did not change the name from Yeshua to Jesus, nor did the early Catholic Church.

Whenever modern theorists insist on the name Yeshua, they are contending for a position the New Testament authors themselves never took. The name of Jesus appears over 900 times in the Greek New Testament, every single time as *Iēsous*. If one travels to Israel, one will find the name of Jesus is still pronounced “Yeshua” today. But not in China, nor in Russia, nor in any European, North, or South American country will he or she find this pronunciation. The spelling and pronunciation of the name of Jesus is not a matter of conspiracy, but of culture.

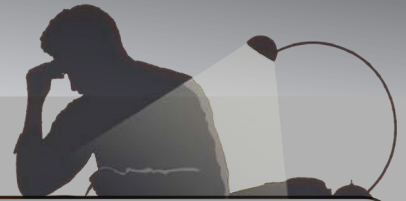
ENDNOTES

- ¹ For a convenient survey of some of the early attempts, see Oskar Skarsaune and Reidar Hvalvik, eds. (2007), *Jewish Believers in Jesus: The Early Centuries* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson).
- ² Syriac is an Eastern language closely related to Aramaic. The first translations of the New Testament from Greek into Syriac appear in the fourth century A.D.



NOTE FROM

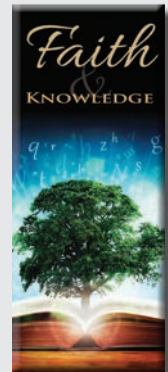
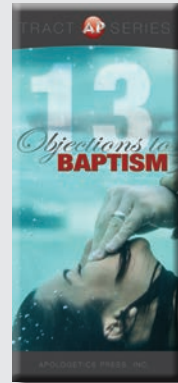
The Editor



More Tracts Now Available

Through the years, one of the more effective ways to evangelize has been the use of tracts. Tracts offer readers an abbreviated, condensed assessment of one particular truth designed to point them to God. They can be left in restaurants, included in bill payments, left in doctor's offices, or simply handed to strangers in a variety of settings. AP has sought to take full advantage of this avenue of outreach by providing Christians with tracts on a variety of subjects. We have endeavored to make them colorful and visually inviting, succinct, and filled with substance.

We continue to expand our offerings and also rewrite and refurbish our older tracts. We have recently released three that we think will be helpful to the cause of Christ. First, we have created a tract from an article that appeared in *Reason & Revelation* titled *13 Objections to Baptism*. Additionally, we have refurbished two of our older tracts, the first titled *Christianity & Humanism*



and the second *Faith & Knowledge*. We believe all three of these tracts will be useful to you in your efforts to spiritually educate others.

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Dave Miller

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